

UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGIES

- **Finding Main Idea**

The main idea of a reading passage is a sentence that tells what the passage is mostly about. Questions about main idea might ask you to find what a passage is *mostly about* or *mainly about*. The questions might also ask you to choose the best title for a passage. When answering a question about main idea, ask yourself, *What is the passage mostly about?* Then choose your answer.

- **Recalling Facts and Details**

Every reading passage contains facts and details. The facts and details tell more about the main idea. Questions about facts and details ask you about something that was stated in the passage. To answer a question about a fact or detail, look back to the passage to find the answer.

- **Understanding Sequence**

Sometimes, a passage is told in order, or sequence. Different things happen at the beginning, middle, and ending of a passage. Questions about sequence ask you to remember and put events or details in order. Questions about sequence often contain key words such as *first*, *then*, *last*, *after* or *before*.

- **Recognising Cause and Effect**

A cause is something that happens. An effect is something that happens because of the cause. Read this sentence: 'I forgot to set my alarm clock, so I was late for school.' The cause of being late for school was forgetting to set the alarm clock. The effect of forgetting to set the alarm clock is being late for school. Questions about cause and effect usually begin with the key words *why*, *what happened* or *because*.

- **Comparing and Contrasting**

Some questions ask you to find how two things are alike or different. This is called compare and contrast, or finding likenesses and differences. Questions that ask you to compare or contrast usually contain key words such as *most like*, *different*, *alike* or *similar*.

- **Making Predictions**

A prediction is something you think will happen in the future. Questions about predictions ask what will *probably* or *most likely* happen next. You will not find the answer to these questions in the passage. But there are clues you can use from the passage to make a good guess about what might happen next.